

Minutes

South La Crosse Transportation Study

Public Information Meeting

WisDOT Project ID 1644-08-00

Thursday, September 2, 2004

4:30 p.m.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, La Crosse, WI

Minutes by: Chuck Wade

Present: WisDOT – Beth Price, Dale Oestreich
LAPC – Tom Faella
City of La Crosse – Larry Kirch
SEH Inc. – Darren Fortney, Jim Hanson, Chuck Wade
Media – La Crosse Tribune, WXOW – TV 19
Public and Local Officials – Approximately 120 persons attended the meeting

Display: Corridor base map of urban and rural segments

Materials distributed: Project contacts sheet, copy of presentation slides, comment form, multi-modal corridor field guide

Action items: Mail additional handouts to those persons requesting them.
WisDOT will conduct special counts at the Mormon Coulee Road/33rd Street intersection.
Post meeting notices on city buses.

The meeting format was an open house session with a formal presentation. The presentation outline was as follows:

1. Welcome
2. Study overview

Darren Fortney and Jim Hanson presented project background information including the purpose and need, limits, timeline, and other information (crash, deficiencies, origin/destination study, etc.)

3. Land use/transportation/access refresher

Chuck Wade presented a brief synopsis of basic planning concepts such as the continuous development/transportation cycle, roadway hierarchy, and access management.

Meeting attendees were able to discuss issues with staff in the open house portion of the meeting. Staff notes from those discussions follow:

- A local resident of the Old Town Hall Road area indicated a lack of alternative routes available should the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection to be closed for an emergency.
- A local bus user would like to see future meeting notices placed on buses.
- Enhanced bus service is needed in the study area.
- The La Crosse Tribune did not indicate the presentation time in the paper.
- There is a need to accommodate a left-turn at the South Avenue/16th Street intersection. The user also indicated that the “lighting pattern” was not correct.
- An issue with the Mormon Coulee Road/33rd Street intersection is the difficulty for bike and pedestrian users to cross safely. A bus stop is located on the east side of Mormon Coulee Road. Vehicles currently travel between 50 and 55 mph through the intersection.
- Need to have advance-warning lights to indicate that a signal will turn red (see Minnesota).
- A temporary crossing into the mobile home park south of the current entrance was constructed several years ago. Could reopening this access be a possible way to provide additional circulation?
- The current roadway design east of the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection results in high noise for local residents. It is currently constructed of concrete, and vehicle tires cause noise when they impact the expansion joints between the concrete segments. What are the noise mitigation possibilities in this area?
- Because of rapid acceleration for vehicles to get up to the posted speed on eastbound US 14/61 after negotiating the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection, it is difficult to safely access driveways located within this zone of acceleration.
- There is a perception that the speed limit is too high as vehicles turn eastbound on US 14/61 from the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection.
- The Schmidt property is slated to be converted to a residential development.
- Rural segments of the study have issues with deer crossing the roadway.
- What will the impact of additional tourist traffic be on the function of US 14/61 and the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection? The shrine anticipates having high numbers of visitors annually. A hospitality center may be constructed nearby increasing the number of visitors using US 14/61 to access the area.
- The US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection is dangerous due to the angle of the sun and WIS 35 pavement color (vehicles blending into the roadway). What is the feasibility of an interchange at the location?
- A local resident suggested realigning the US 14/61 highway north to WIS 33 from Helke Road to Hagen Road. The 3.46-mile route would bypass the South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road corridor and redistribute traffic to Jackson Street. A map of the proposed route was provided.
- Vehicles are currently using the alley behind South Avenue/West Avenue for southbound to eastbound movements because left turns are not allowed at the South Avenue/West Avenue intersection.
- Traffic from the residential area located between South Avenue and the Mississippi River funnels to West Avenue to make left turns. There is not sufficient gap in South Avenue traffic to make left turns out of the residential area at other intersecting streets.
- A resident complained of severe pavement vibration at the Mormon Coulee Road/Shelby Road intersection.
- Local circulation is needed for vehicles, pedestrians, and bikes in the Brickyard Lane and Old Town Hall Road areas.

- Need cross access between developments located in the Brickyard Lane and Old Town Hall Road areas.
- There is a need to promote better internal circulation in parking lots.
- What was the effect of the signal timing study? WisDOT checked into the study and found that various signals in La Crosse had been adjusted.
- There were numerous concerns expressed about safety at the Mormon Coulee Road/33rd Street intersection. Signals have not met warrants in the past. Staff should examine other options for the intersection as well.
- Emergency services and alternative routes are lacking in the US14/61/WIS 35 area. Improvements are needed.
- A written document was provided by a local resident to staff outlining needs and solutions for the Maple Grove Addition by the school. The comments are formally entered into the minutes as follows:
 - Turn from Hwy 14/61 to Hwy 35 very dangerous and confusing.
 - Southbound traffic turning onto 14/61 also has cross-traffic turn with only a yield. Causes northbound traffic on Hwy 35 to anticipate a car failing to yield.
 - Who has the right-of-way where southbound lanes merge with traffic from Hwy 35 and incoming Hwy 14/61?
 - The turn from Hwy 35 onto Old Town Road is dangerous on Hwy 35 because of where traffic stops while waiting to turn. It's really in the inbound lane from Hwy 14/61. If there is traffic coming from Hwy 14/61 while cars are waiting to turn or trying to stop to turn, it's a dicey stop.
 - Also, the turn onto Old Town Road is banked "out." In the winter cars tend to slide into the lawn of the house at the corner of Old Town Road and Hwy 35.
 - Incoming traffic to Old Town Road that is coming from the north also tends to come down the wrong lane, narrowly missing any car approaching the stop sign to leave the Old Town Road neighborhood. This is especially true if the exiting car is coming from Robil Court West, where visibility of the car is diminished.
 - Turning out of Old Town Road is more difficult since Hwy 35 has been reduced to one traffic lane. Traffic on the Hwy 35 is moving at 50-55 mph. In the winter, this is an uphill-around-the-turn-launch into fast moving, heavy traffic.
 - There is only one access to the south end of town. A cut is needed from the Vista del Rio/Southwinds addition to Hwy 14/61 that avoids the large intersection. Emergency access even with that is not good; Hwy 33 is a long way around if the Hwy 14/61/35 intersection is blocked.
 - Need a bike/pedestrian crossing into Old Town Road and Southern Bluffs school neighborhood. Also extend the sidewalk to Southern Bluffs School and the bike trail to Goose Island.
 - Mormon Coulee Road and 33rd Street is very dangerous.
 - Street flooding in the area of the new Kwik Trip on Mormon Coulee (since Wal-Mart?).
 - Old Town Road has a speeding problem.

Comment forms were provided to meeting attendees for input into the project. Attendees could fill in the forms at the meeting or provide comments via mail. The forms were organized by six topical areas and are submitted as written:

1. Traffic congestion, safety, noise:

- Bad, loud
- Traffic Congestion is Terrible!!! Makes it very unsafe. (mailed)
- The traffic congestion on Mormon Coulee is very bad!! (mailed)

- Traffic safety and congestion is a real concern at 33rd Street and Mormon Coulee Road. Lot happening at that intersection cars, bicycles, people, bus stop. (mailed)
 - There is a lot of traffic at 7:00 a.m. when I go to work and come home at 4:00 pm. Have to use the center turn lane just to get out of the court which is very dangerous. Need lights at the intersection of Mormon Coulee & (no finished sentence) (mailed)
 - One area I see traffic congestion is between West Avenue and East Avenue. I'd like to see more turning lanes. You wait forever waiting for a car to turn onto a side street or Kwik Trip and you can not go ahead on either side. (mailed)
 - Safety concern going up hill by Buckworks. Somewhat of a blind approach. Putting a stop light at 35/14/61 and 33rd Street would cause more problems. It is too close to where the highways come into town and the speed limit changes. (mailed)
 - 33rd and Mormon Coulee – main issue – safety-relief – reduce speed. Not allowing 53 mph in a 40 mph zone. La Crosse Police allows this overage, because it's a long corridor they say. (mailed)
 - There are 3 or 4 buses that pick-up kids for school daily, and I would think that for SAFETY reason's alone, those buses need to get out on "Mormon Coulee Road" without any problems. The answer is we need traffic lights (mailed)
 - We are in dire need of a stop & go light on 33rd and Mormon Coulee Road. The traffic from 14/61 coming around the corner is so fast as well as traffic south on Mormon Coulee Road. It is often difficult to judge the distance of the cars. (mailed)
 - Morning and evening (after work) traffic is especially heavy and entering the highway from a driveway or access road is difficult, especially left-turns. (mailed)
 - Traffic lights create traffic problems/congestion. No to light on 33rd Street. Why stop 60 cars for one car. Create inside turn lanes at this intersection in both directions. Remove billboard at Wal-Mart (blocks view). Have light north of Pammel Creek blink for caution in the morning. Create right-turn lane on Mormon Coulee Road onto Victory/Hewitt. Allow for two left-turns from West Ave. to South Ave. Both lights at hospital should not be set to favor cross-traffic on a highway. Highway 35 should be four lanes up to Goose Island with a corrected intersection. Frontage roads should be considered when possible. (mailed)
2. Access to schools, businesses, and other locations on South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road:
- Difficult to cross at Mormon Coulee Road/33rd Street intersection.
 - Easier Accesses are needed badly with much less congestion. (mailed)
 - More and easier accesses are needed desperately. There is way too much congestion. (mailed)
 - Lots of driveways entrance and exits to same businesses. (mailed)
 - Kids should not have to cross the highway to get the school bus. Access to business seems pretty good. (mailed)
 - It is terrible to get off 33rd street onto Mormon Coulee Road. It will become worse with more residential homes being built. (mailed)

- Lots of driveways. Would be nice to have more space to turn into Southern Bluffs without fear of being rear ended turning left. (mailed)
 - If La Crosse has an engine braking ordinance, then why don't they get it posted? The overpass on Mormon Coulee is where this usually happens (mailed)
 - Same as above More Traffic Lights (mailed)
 - Ample traffic lights make access easy. (mailed)
 - Not that much of a problem. Frontage roads would be helpful. (mailed)
3. How do you feel about corridor amenities such as landscaping/street trees, lighting, signs (commercial signs, billboards, park signs, other signs), and architectural elements (buildings, bike racks, benches)?
- They are ok (mailed)
 - No problem(mailed)
 - Beautifying is nice but traffic situation needs to be solved first and foremost (mailed)
 - Landscaping would be nice with more trees; lighting seems to be pretty good; don't like billboards. Bike racks and benches are good to have (mailed)
 - I have no comments – we don't need any more billboards (mailed)
 - The main thing that could help in the present times is "reduced speed" (mailed)
 - I think we have too many billboards now, blocky Hwy views. (mailed)
 - I like the signs along the highway announcing the next cross-road coming up, but wonder why there is none for Breidel Coulee Road/Pineview Drive intersection? (mailed)
 - This is important. It is what visitors see when they visit us. Less billboards, trim grasses, etc. (mailed)
4. How important are bike and pedestrian accommodations (such as bike lanes, sidewalks, trails) to your use of South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road?
- Very Important (mailed)
 - I feel they are very important (mailed)
 - Yes, I feel it is important to make it accessible to pedestrians and bikers and also make it as safe as possible for them (mailed)
 - Very important (mailed)
 - It is important (mailed)
 - Extremely important. To have a bike/walk path along 14/61, so don't always have to drive into town, can use another form of transportation. (mailed)
 - Bike riders need to obey signs as well as anyone else. Example 33rd and Mormon Coulee bike trail. Posted signs, but adult bike riders do not adhere to them when crossing 33rd Street. (mailed)
 - I think bike lanes would agree, providing the people stay in the lanes. (mailed)
 - I feel there is too much traffic to not have these accommodations. There are a fair amount of pedestrians, joggers, bikers, and accommodations for them increase their safety as well as that of the motorists. (mailed)
 - Important. People need to be able to walk safely. (mailed)
5. How might land use change on the corridor in the future?
- Needs many changes (mailed)
 - I hope to see a lot of changes (mailed)

- You may want to investigate an exit from River Crest Village Mobile Home Park on the south end over to where 14-61-35 all come together and put stoplights there. (mailed)
- I expect to see more construction (mailed)
- How about a grant for the Sheriffs Dept. For their speed checks on 14/61/35, Mormon Coulee instead of always on Hwy 16 where they have easy prey. Let them earn it the proper way. (mailed)
- The Future, that's a laugh, what ever the CITY will do, they will still be 20/30 years behind time (Traffic). (Mailed)
- Service roads – less direct access to driveways. (mailed)
- Consider Park & Ride locations outside area. If we can lessen the numbers of cars coming in and out during work time, good for everyone. (mailed)

6. Additional comments:

- You should consider extending the study area beyond County M to Justin Road because of shrine traffic and new housing.
- How about an overhead bridge to cross at the Mormon Coulee Road/33rd Street intersection.
- Paint the turning lanes.
- Why are there arrows exactly in the turning lanes? During winter when there is snow, no-one can see the arrows anyway.
- We really need a traffic signal at the Mormon Coulee Road/33rd Street intersection.
- Coming out of River Crest Village (trailer park), I need to look for children, people walking dogs, children playing, bicyclists, etc. And that is even before I get to the railroad tracks where a train may be coming by, or maybe two. At times they come one after the other, or occasionally, simultaneously. Then finally when I get to Mormon Coulee Road, I have to wait often to turn or cross the road. Many times there are angry motorists behind me honking. The stress is intense to say the least, not to mention I never know how long it will take me to get anywhere.
- Stop and go lights are badly needed at the intersection of Mormon Coulee and 33rd street. At certain times, a person can't hardly get out onto Mormon Coulee. You have to get out onto the center turn medium which is very dangerous. There is no turning lane going onto 33rd street even. This is a BAD intersection!! And it's the only way to get out of 33rd Street (mailed)
- I am hoping to see stop and go lights go up at the intersection of Mormon Coulee and 33rd Street. There are times of the day you can not even get out of 33rd Street onto Mormon Coulee. Coming onto 33rd St. off of Mormon Coulee there isn't even a turning lane. This is a very dangerous intersection Very Unsafe!! (mailed)
- That would solve our exit problems also you could put a frontage road from Geneva terrace to the road that came from River Crest to 14-16-35 highways. (mailed)
- I understand that turning onto Mormon Coulee Road is against the Law!! If that is true than that's another reason why we need traffic lights there.